

## **1.1 Public Participation**

### **1.1.1 Introduction**

While closely linked to public education efforts (see 1.2 – Education), public participation involves efforts that reach beyond one-way communication. Public participation efforts will focus on activities and communications efforts that not only allow for, but encourage, public input and involvement, and potentially collaborative decision making on programs and decisions related to storm water pollution prevention. So, while an education effort might involve distribution of fact sheets and brochures, airing of advertisements, and promoting media coverage of an event, for example, public participation would go further to such efforts as hosting neighborhood meetings, assembling an advisory council or sponsoring an issue-specific task force.

Public participation will be critical throughout the duration of the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program for a number of reasons. Two-way interaction will allow feedback on the effectiveness of key messages (see Message Strategy below); identification of concerns, opportunities and audience specific interests; better assurance that community interests are represented; and buy-in through open decision making and participation. But to be successful, public participation programs must be genuine – there must be a commitment to incorporate public input into decision-making. And public participation efforts must be ongoing. This plan covers five years; regular participation efforts should be scheduled in order to keep a pulse on changing perceptions and evolving issues, and gauge program accomplishments or areas in need of additional focus. Further, given the fact that the success of the program relies on achieving behavioral changes, continual direct interaction with key stakeholders will be critical.

Lack of interest in an issue or activity is often an obstacle for public participation programs. Fortunately for the City of San Diego Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program, however, community members are keenly interested in issues related to pollution of the ocean, bays and beaches (For a copy of the “Survey of City Residents,” prepared for the Storm Water Program, visit the THINK BLUE website at, <http://www.thinkbluesd.org>). It would appear, based on survey responses, that diverse members of the community can be motivated to not only offer their input and concerns about the issues, but also be prompted to take action.

### **1.1.2 Public Participation Goals and Objectives**

The City of San Diego recognizes the key role that public participation will play in the success of pollution prevention efforts. Specific goals and objectives identified by the

City of San Diego for its storm water pollution prevention public participation efforts include:

- Establishing the City of San Diego as not only a clean water leader but also a community partner and supporter of storm water pollution prevention efforts.
- Developing long-term relationships with stakeholder groups that will be beneficial to City's water quality efforts and other community programs.
- Establishing an ongoing program under which key stakeholders are routinely and continuously involved.
- Supporting the overall mission and objectives of the City of San Diego's Storm Water Prevention Program and this Urban Runoff Management Plan to *"increase the knowledge and reduce the polluting behaviors of target audiences."*
- Assessing general understanding of the storm water pollution issue and developing collaborative ideas for changing and/or modifying behaviors.
- Learning about specific concerns and opportunities and how these might differ among various stakeholder groups. This will be important since interests among groups may sometimes be contradictory.
- Through public participation, identifying messages that will resonate with key stakeholders and encourage behavioral changes.
- Providing for input from diverse groups and individuals from throughout the City of San Diego regarding the Plan and specific pollution prevention activities and behaviors.
- Identifying evolving community concerns/interests throughout the duration of the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program outreach efforts.
- Allowing for collaborative decision making on key issues impacting the general community or specific areas or interests.
- Building a supportive group of citizens from throughout the community who will help shape and ultimately implement pollution prevention activities and programs.
- Providing for various measurements of program achievements through community input.
- Demonstrating a measurable increase in target audience knowledge of the storm water conveyance system(s), and a measurable change in the behavior of the target audiences regarding storm water pollution.

### **1. 1.3 Audiences/Stakeholders**

Key stakeholders, and particularly those who should be involved in participation efforts, must routinely be assessed and evaluated throughout the program. So, for example,

while initial efforts may focus generally on the topic of storm water pollution, subsequent participation efforts may be very narrowly focused either by watershed issues, or property-use issues, for example. At the outset, however, potential public participation audiences will include:

- Internal Stakeholders:
  - City Staff
  - Quasi Governmental Agencies/Districts conducting official City business ( i.e. Planning Groups, Town Councils, and advisory panels, etc.)
- External Stakeholders:
  - Construction Site Owners and Developers
  - Industrial Owners and Operators
  - Commercial Owners and Operators
  - Residential Community, General Public including:
    - Local Community Based Interest Groups
    - Organizations associated with tourism and transportation
    - Homeowners Associations
    - Ethnic Organizations
    - Higher Education Institutions and School Districts
    - Local Private Schools
    - Civic and Social Organizations (Rotary, Lions, etc.)
    - Seniors Centers and Organizations
    - Medical Community
    - Watershed-based Organizations
    - Environmental Groups

#### **1. 1.4 Message Strategy**

City of San Diego outreach messages are detailed in Section 1.2 – Education and will also be used as a basis for all public participation activities. From there, as public participation efforts are fine-tuned, issue specific messages will need to be crafted – ideally in collaboration with key stakeholders. Initial program key messages involve:

Openness to Input -- Public participation must, at a minimum, address one or more decisions to be made and how the public will influence those decisions. The City of San Diego will first convey the importance it places on public input and its commitment to incorporating public input into its decision making process for this Program.

Commitment to the Process -- The City will then convey its commitment to the public participation process. This does not mean that the City will act on every recommendation made by the public. Instead, it means the City will commit to a process for evaluating and incorporating public input that is transparent and communicated in advance to all participants.

Once these two key public participation messages are conveyed, the City will communicate the general messages about the Program itself:

General Awareness – Bringing attention to the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program generally, and providing information about specific, common behaviors that can change in order to achieve measurable storm water pollution prevention. During the first year of outreach these will include:

*Automotive Pollution*

- Leak prevention and proper disposal of automobile fluids
- Spill cleanup
- Disposal of Automotive Fluids
- Automobile washing
- Alternative transportation and carpooling

*Bacteria*

- Pet waste and proper cleanup
- Sewer lateral maintenance
- Sewer spill reporting hotline
- Recreational Vehicle sewage disposal

*General litter and pollutants*

- Cleanup methods for outdoor spills
- Prevention of runoff to storm drains
- Project material storage
- Cleanup methods after improvement projects

One already-developed and implemented campaign message includes:

The 3 C's:

Control: Locate the nearest storm drain(s) and take measures to ensure nothing will enter or discharge into them. This may require sweeping-up and placing debris and sediment in the trashcan.

Contain: Isolate potential flow or discharge from leaving the area.

Capture: If there is sediment, sweep it up. If there is liquid, absorb it or vacuum it up with a wet-vac.

**Beach Pollution** – One of the Mayor’s top ten goals for the City of San Diego is “Clean up our Beaches and Bays.” The Mayor and Council have committed to reduce beach posting and closure days by 50% by 2004. An initial key message will focus on the fact that the largest cause of beach contamination is the result of what residents do every day at home and at work.

In addition, overriding messages for all public participation efforts should include:

- Community Issue – Protection of our waterways from storm water pollution is a community issue that requires community involvement. The City of San Diego is keenly interested in learning about community concerns and opportunities for cooperative efforts.
- Long-Term Commitment – Storm water pollution prevention will be ongoing and will require behavioral changes. The City of San Diego needs partners throughout the region to encourage support and action from their peers.

### **1.1.5 Public Participation Strategies and Tactics**

Despite common perceptions that public participation is limited to advisory groups, participation tools can in fact run the gamut from those that raise awareness of issues (and in turn increase likelihood of participation) to those that actively engage members of the public in collaborative decision-making.

In April 2001, the **City of San Diego Clean Water Task Force** was established by Mayor Dick Murphy to advise the Mayor and City Council on water quality issues. “Clean up Our Beaches and Bays” is one of the Mayor’s top ten goals. The Task Force, co-chaired by the Mayor and Councilmember Scott Peters, consists of elected officials, academics, environmentalists, business interests, professionals, and other agency representatives. The Task Force meets routinely and will provide ample opportunities to obtain input from community stakeholders and government agencies. Thus far, the Clean Water Task Force reviewed and approved in concept the updated Storm Water Ordinance (and related revisions to the Land Development Code), the draft Model Standard Urban Storm Water Mitigation Plan (SUSMP), and various water quality projects. The Task Force has also advocated for State funding for specific water quality projects.

In addition, the City of San Diego has an established council committee, Natural Resources and Cultural Committee to address environmental issues. This committee

typically meets twice a month and is publicly noticed. As often as possible the City will pose specific questions and bring significant issues forward to the committee for consideration.

Public participation needs will evolve throughout the duration of the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program. As these needs evolve, so will the tools used. Tools available to the City of San Diego include:

Telephone Surveys -- The City of San Diego has already conducted a baseline survey specifically related to Storm Water Pollution Prevention (see Appendix \_\_\_ - Survey of City Residents). This survey will be conducted annually to measure attitudinal and behavioral changes.

Mail Surveys – While not as statistically generalizable to the population of interest, mailed surveys can give the City a snapshot of public opinion quickly and inexpensively. These can take the form of response cards in newsletters, newspaper “coupons” or mailed questionnaires.

Focus Groups – Focus groups provide an excellent means of quickly obtaining input beyond that achieved through survey format in which respondents are most often selecting from a predetermined choice of responses. Focus groups, instead, will allow for richer, more descriptive input and perceptions that are derived as a consequence of group interaction during the focus group. Focus groups can be particularly useful in testing the effectiveness and resonance of strategic communications messages.

Information Phone Line – Some hotlines involve prerecorded messages that offer information to callers. Others – that allow for public participation opportunities – are staffed by knowledgeable representatives who can respond to and log caller inquiries and/or allow callers to leave messages that can be responded to at a later date. Through careful tracking of calls, the City of San Diego can develop a valuable database of issues important to residents throughout the life of the outreach program.

The City has already partnered with the region by lending its Think Blue educational program brand to the County of San Diego which hosts the region-wide “Think Blue” hotline. It has an easy to remember phone number of 888-THINK BLue. The hotline is interactive and is staffed by a bilingual (Spanish) operator. Requests for information are forwarded the same day to the appropriate municipality.

Web Site – The Internet is a first source of information for many Americans today. It can also be a tool for public involvement. While this is still an emerging technique, given the long-term nature of the Program, the Internet should be considered a valuable public participation tool. The City’s web site, [www.thinkbluesd.org](http://www.thinkbluesd.org) is interactive as it allows users to participate in on-line surveys, discussion boards, and opt-in e-mail lists. By serving as a comprehensive information repository, the Program web site will

encourage public involvement by informing the public about the important issues associated with the Program.

*Stakeholder Interviews* – Meeting with stakeholders one-on-one provides an environment conducive to relationship and trust building. On a regular basis, stakeholders should be consulted in this type of format to learn about concerns, issues of interest and opportunities for the Program.

*Speakers Bureau* – Most speakers bureau engagements leave ample time for audience questions. And informal questions received prior to or after a speech can be equally informative. Again, the key will be to record and log question areas. After a series of speaking engagements, question trends and primary areas of interest will be apparent – helping to guide future outreach efforts.

*Door-to-Door Canvassing* – This type of interaction can be very useful – particularly if focused on a particular area. For example, as the City of San Diego moves to watershed based public participation and education, door-to-door canvassing can be useful in identifying issues particular to that geographic region. Of course, this strategy is labor and time intensive, so should be used in a limited fashion.

*Information Booths/Kiosks* – A host of opportunities exist for the City to set up an informational booth or kiosk during community events, or in high-traffic areas. The kiosk can not only provide information to passers by, but can be staffed to allow one-on-one discussions with interested residents.

*Meetings, Hearings, Open Houses and Workshops* – There will be times when a public meeting is the best way to exchange information with stakeholders and other target audiences. Other times, public meetings will be required by law. In either case, public meetings will be made more effective with ample noticing and careful planning. Meetings, hearings and workshops need to be held at times and locations convenient for the public. And, the meetings should be run by a third-party facilitator to encourage productive dialog.

*Advisory Group* -- Topic or issue-specific advisory groups are often the best way to effect meaningful public participation. They are time consuming to convene and manage, but they pay off in terms of better public decision-making. Topics that lend themselves well to this type of public participation tool include those that are highly controversial and/or complex. Advisory groups should represent a broad cross section of community interests and be facilitated by a third party to be most effective. They must have a clearly understood task and level of authority.

Partnerships – Some participation efforts may best be undertaken in coordination with already established organizations allowing for input from their members. Examples of such groups include:

- Educational Institutions
- Environmental Groups
- Scouting Groups
- Construction Industry
- Business and Industry Groups
- Tourism
- Civic Associations
- Legislators

Each of these and others can provide specialized insight into interests and concerns of the key stakeholders they serve.



### 1.1.6 Annual Assessment

The following form is representative of the quantitative and qualitative measures that will be tracked by the Storm Water Program regarding the Public Participation component in order to prepare the Jurisdictional Urban Runoff Management Program annual assessment. *These assessment factors and questions are presented for information only; some questions may be modified prior to each annual assessment period, and not all of the factors or questions below may apply to each component's responsible department(s).* Prior to each fiscal year, a tailored Annual Assessment Form will be distributed to responsible departments, and will include an Excel spreadsheet containing direct and indirect quantitative and qualitative measures similar to the example below. The Storm Water Program will provide a blank copy of the Annual Assessment Form and additional guidance to department management prior to the beginning of each fiscal year. Submission of this report will require department director approval.

#### Program Assessment Form - Public Participation Component

##### QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT:

Activity	Quantity	Units	Explanation (if needed)
Number of opportunities provided which enabled the public to participate		#	Consider every opportunity for public input on storm water issues

##### QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT:

1. Describe the major accomplishments of the Public Participation Component over the past year. Also, describe the mechanisms used for public participation.

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2. Summarize the internal and external educational and outreach activities conducted as part of the Public Participation component over the past year.

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3. Summarize new activities or improvements to be implemented next year as a result of your self assessment.

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4. Other comments.

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**FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT:**

Estimated annual storm water expenditures:

Personnel Expenditures: \_\_\_\_\_

Non-personnel Expenditures: \_\_\_\_\_